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# Farm Broadcasters Letter

Letter No. 2218

June 20, 1985

## FARM VALUE OF FOOD

The farm value of U.S. Department of Agriculture's market basket of foods rose by 5.3 percent in 1984, the first time since 1978 that the increase exceeded that of retail prices. However, because of depressed farm prices over several years, the 1984 farm value of foods was only 7 pct. above the 1980 value; in contrast, retail food prices rose 17 pct. over the same time. Here are some examples of prices. One dozen large eggs, \$1.02 retail price...Farm value, 66 cents. One pound choice beef, \$2.40 retail value...Farm value, \$1.40. One pound white bread, 54 cents retail...Farm value, 5 cents.

## BUSY COWS

Milk production during May 1985 totaled 12.8 billion pounds, 5 pct. more than in May 1984, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Accumulated milk production for the first five months totaled 58.4 billion pounds, 1 pct. more than the comparable period in 1984. Production per cow averaged 1164 pounds, 32 pounds more than May 1984. (For more statistical information, call 202-447-6351.)

## WIND DAMAGE

Winds damaged 8.5 million acres in the Great Plains during the seven months ending May 31, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture. That's about one-third fewer acres than during the comparable period a year earlier. Of the land damaged, 95 pct. was cropland, 4 pct. was rangeland and 1 pct. was other land. Texas reported 2.8 million acres damaged, more than any other State and one-third of the total reported for the entire region. Even so, Texas reported only half as many acres damaged this year as last. Damage was also extensive in Montana and N. Dakota.

## GRASSHOPPERS HOME ON THE RANGE

Sec'y of Agriculture John Block has made an additional \$15 million in federal funds available to areas with a serious infestation of rangeland grasshoppers. The \$15 million will be transferred from the Commodity Credit Corporation immediately to supplement the \$10 million announced on May 9. Under the program, USDA provides total funding for grasshopper control on federally-owned rangeland, one-half the funding on state-owned rangeland and one-third the funding on privately-owned rangeland. To be eligible, the infested areas must meet certain size and other criteria.

## POLLY WANT SAY SOMETHING?

The U.S. Department of Agriculture is reopening the comment period on a proposal to amend regulations governing the importation of pet, commercial, zoological and research birds. The extension is to give industry and other interested persons adequate time to respond. The proposal was published in the May 3 Federal Register and notice of this action in the June 17 Federal Register.

NEW TRICHINA  
REGULATION

The U.S. Department of Agriculture will allow some producers of dry-cured and country ham to continue using traditional, but not specifically approved, methods for trichina destruction while research determines effective new methods. USDA has learned that many small firms producing dry-cured or country hams use traditional procedures that are believed to destroy trichina parasites but will not meet USDA requirements. Firms wishing to use such procedures past Aug. 6, when revised regulations become effective, must submit a description of their processes to USDA by that date.

ELECTRICAL  
SLAUGHTER

As of June 18, the U.S. Department of Agriculture is allowing federal meat slaughter plants to use an electrical slaughtering method that instantly stops the heart when animals are stunned. Scientific data indicate this method is effective and humane, and results in good quality meat comparable to meat slaughtered under traditional methods. Electrical slaughter is an alternative to other approved humane slaughter methods.

WHO'S  
THERE

Using a membrane in the endpiece of a common medical stethoscope, a scientist of the U.S. Department of Agriculture can hear maggots chewing on the fruit pulp inside a grapefruit. He can also hear an insect chewing inside a kernel of grain in a quart of uninfested kernels. That's about one kernel in 25,000. This method of insect detection is still in experimental stages but will help make our food more attractive for export.

CONFERENCE  
ON THE RANGE

Sec'y of Agriculture John Block invited more than 60 private organizations to join the U.S. Department of Agriculture and other government agencies in planning a National Conference on Range, scheduled for Nov. 6-8, 1985, in Oklahoma City, Okla. The conference will focus on innovation in management, efficiency of production, improved hargesting and marketing methods, new uses for goods and services from the range, and techniques for conserving and improving range to strengthen the economy and protect the environment. (For more information, contact: Douglas Sellars, c/o Nat'l Rangeland Conf., P.O. Box 2890, Wash., D.C. 20013.)

NEW STANDARDS  
FOR PIMA COTTON

The U.S. Department of Agriculture will put into effect new grade standards for American Pima cotton on July 1, 1986. USDA will reduce the number of physical grade standards from nine to six by consolidating some of the existing grades. The color range within each of the new standards will be widened. The standards were published in the June 18 Federal Register.

NEW PROCEDURES  
FOR TIMBER  
SALE

The Forest Service of the U.S. Department of Agriculture is adopting new procedures to administer the Small Business Timber Sale Set-Aside Program. The set-aside program ensures that small businesses have the opportunity to purchase a fair proportion of timber sales from the national forests. The Forest Service will begin using the new procedures Oct. 1. Details are in the June 13 Federal Register. (For further information, contact Charles Fudge, Timber Management Staff, Forest Service, USDA, P.O. Box 2417, Wash., D.C. 20013. Or call (202) 475-3754.)

U.S. TOBACCO  
EXPORTS

U.S. leaf tobacco exports in April were up 64 pct. from April 1984 to 24,623 tons, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Burley exports accounted for 50 pct. of April shipments, while the flue-cured share was 34 pct. Cumulative exports for Jan.-April were 84,621 tons, up 15 pct. from last year. Burley exports increased 67 pct., while flue-cured exports were about the same level.

FROM OUR  
TELEVISION  
SERVICE

LATIN AMERICA...Most Latin American economies improved in 1984, and the outlook for 1985 calls for continued improvement. USDA economist John Link focuses on Latin America and its agriculture. Jim Johnson interviews. (406)

EXOTIC NEWCASTLE DISEASE - I...Dr. E. C. Sharman with USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service focuses on the recent case of Exotic Newcastle disease in Missouri, and methods taken to handle that situation. DeBoria Janifer interviews. (407)

EXOTIC NEWCASTLE DISEASE - II...Dr. E. C. Sharman with USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service continues his discussion on Exotic Newcastle disease, and its relationship to humans and the economy. DeBoria Janifer interviews. (408)

FOREIGN AGRICULTURAL TRADE...Increased world agricultural production and lower prices depressed U.S. agricultural exports for the first seven months of 1985. USDA economist Tom Warden talks about the current outlook for foreign agricultural trade in the U.S. DeBoria Janifer interviews. (409)

INJURED WORKERS PROJECT...Dr. Martha Lamberts, Washington State University, discusses the Injured Workers Project, initiated in 1982 by Washington State University to address the needs of injured workers and their families in both urban and rural areas. DeBoria Janifer interviews. (410)

STOMATITIS  
IN N.M.

Vesicular stomatitis, a viral disease that causes blister-like lesions in cattle, horses, swine, sheep and goats, has been reported on three premises in New Mexico, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture. It's important that vesicular stomatitis not be confused with foot-and-mouth disease, since both have similar symptoms. All livestock owners should report any vesicular condition to their veterinarians. Symptoms include blisters on the mouth, tongue, teats, feet and occasionally on other exposed skin areas.

CATFISH  
PROSPERING

Farm-raised catfish processed during May totaled 17.5 million pounds round weight, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture. This is an increase of 36 pct. from May 1984. The May average price paid to growers was 77 cents per pound, 4 cents above May last year. The May average prices received by processors for whole fish was \$1.71 per pound for ice pack and \$1.73 for frozen fish. (For more statistical information, call 202-447-2123.)

WORLD  
TOBACCO  
SITUATION

World unmanufactured tobacco production in 1985 is projected to be 6.3 million tons, down 1 pct. from last year's level, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Flue-cured tobacco production in 1985 is forecast at 3.1 million tons, slightly below the 1984 crop. World burley production in 1985 is forecast at 688,000 tons, a drop of 8 pct. from last year. World oriental production in 1985 is forecast slightly above the 1984 crop.

U.S. TOBACCO  
PRODUCTION

In the United States, 1985 tobacco production is forecast down 14 pct. from the 1984 crop, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture. U.S. tobacco production is expected to be about 670,000 tons from an area of nearly 300,000 hectares. Yields may average slightly below 1984's 2.44 tons per hectare. Production of flue-cured tobacco is forecast down 12 pct. and burley, down 17 pct.

OFF MIKE

A goodly number of farm broadcasters either participated in or monitored and recorded a special event June 19. USDA produced a 45-minute television satellite "event" with Sec'y of Agric. John Block and former Sec'ys of Agric. Bob Bergland, Earl Butz, Clifford Hardin, and Orville Freeman. We're sorry we couldn't get everyone on, but we were able to notify about 400 television stations. We also set up a 40-port teleconference bridge for radio farm broadcasters. A lot of people pitched in at this end to help set it up, and from all indications, it was a successful effort. The Secretaries took to the event like ducks take to water and enjoyed the opportunity to put across their points of view on various subjects ... Stuart Doan has left KAIT-TV, Jonesboro, AR, to work with John Philpot (Agri Radio Net, Little Rock, AR). Consequently, Mike Miller at KAIT-TV is looking for someone to take Stuart's place. If you're interested, call Mike at 501-932-4397 ... The National Association of Government Communicators (our Brenda Curtis-Heiken is the president) held the annual Gold Screen Awards ceremony and two USDA communicators came away winners. Lynn Wyvill earned her award for the Agriculture USDA documentary she produced for radio called "Country Fairs," and Steve Fenwick received his award for a television PSA called "Fair Shake" ... The regional NAFB meetings are over and the summer meeting is just around the corner. And in looking back over notes I've taken at some of the meetings attended so far, I ran across one I attributed to Jim Stewart (KFYO, Lubbock, TX). As you know, some meetings can be marathons of "socializing," so this comment no doubt was picked up at such an occasion. Jim was overheard to say, "It sure doesn't take long to spend a night here." See you at the Summer NAFB meeting!

FROM OUR RADIO SERVICE

AGRICULTURE USA #1464... (Weekly 13½ min documentary) Even on the farm more and more parents are going off to work, leaving their children at home alone after school. Brenda Curtis talks with an expert about these so-called "latchkey children."

AGRITAPE/FARM PROGRAM REPORT #1453... (Weekly reel of news features) USDA news highlights; Public comments sought on proposed wheat referendum; "Sodbuster" proposals; Former Ag. Sec'ys look at farm policy; Brand name beef?

CONSUMER TIME #946... (Weekly reel of five 2½-3 min features) Protecting your child from abduction; Consumer preference and the color of meat; Saving money on ground beef; Mothbusters!; Dogs on alert!

USDA RADIO NEWS SERVICE... Thurs, June 27, Farm real estate market developments; Fri, June 28, Agricultural prices report; Tues, July 2, Crop and weather update. (There are no major reports scheduled until July 10, when the U.S. and world crop production reports will be issued.) (A REMINDER--This listing only covers reports and events we know about in advance. Just because we don't list any items for a particular day, doesn't mean that we aren't putting new items on that day. We change our newsline every day, Monday-Friday.) Dial the USDA National News Line 202-488-8358 or 8359. All material changed at 5 p.m. EDT each working day.



JAMES L. JOHNSON, Chief  
Radio and Television Division